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THE DEAD WEIGHT.

READER, have you ever observed, when attending the examination of a large class in our public schools, that the boys of the upper benches usually respond with readiness, but that, as the master proceeds past the middle, the running-fire of answers becomes less continuous, till their entire cessation gives evidence of there being a sad want of loading in that quarter? An occasional flash in the pan may be given, but no report follows; and a painful impression is left in the mind, that fully a third or a fourth of the corps are in a state decidedly inefficient. These are the 'dead weight.'

Now, it might occur to some who witness the annual examination, that if the master did, while teaching during the session, pass over the lower benches with the same rapidity, their stupidity might easily be accounted for. But little they know of masters, who suppose that the dead weight is to them a light matter. It is, on the contrary, the special 'crook in the lot'—their rock ahead—the thing, and the only thing, which in this world prevents their complete happiness. How often, in the beginning of the session, has the master, with chivalrous ardour, rushed into this thick mass of stupidity, threatening, cajoling, bullying, thrashing! The exertions of a drover to make his cattle take the water at a ferrying-place, of a Shetlander to compel the landing of a shoal of whales, are but faint shadowings of the exertions of a teacher at this time. With brute unconsciousness they see him sent back into his desk, where, breathless, foaming, he confesses the awful power of dulness; nor does one ray of comfort visit his heart till he turns his eye to the higher benches, where he knows that labour never fails to meet its reward. Still, his conscience prompts him to another attack. Another raid is made into the region of dulness; but the only result is, as before, a prostration of his energies, and a sense of the utter hopelessness of the task which he has undertaken.

But what, literally, is this dead weight? It is the accompaniment, the appendix, the tail of every public class. Its members are externally respectable, imposing; and, meet them separately, they are good-natured, sensible, and obliging. They are sometimes ingenious—ingenious in everything but what forms the business of the class. Their benches are more curiously carved than any others in the school; and when the master himself is led to inspect these results of their labours, he discovers, in sundry caricatures of himself, the germs of imitation and observant genius, and is half tempted to treat them with more respect. They are frequently affectionate and good-hearted; and the black eye of the lowest on the form, for which he receives a stern reprimand, is in some instances to be traced to a quarrel between dux and booby, in consequence of the former

speaking contemptuously of the master. They are generally brave, fearless of danger, and animated by feelings akin to patriotism. In the bickerings between different classes they are peculiarly the leaders, and as particularly the sufferers. Although they can see no beauty in the character of *Eneas* and the ancient heroes, they are the devoted admirers of *Wallace* and *Nelson*; and, while the higher pupils are directing their eyes to the page of *Sallust* or *Virgil*, the eyes of the dead weight are falling not on these ancient authors, who are meritiously expanded on the board before them, but on some well-thumbed suspicious-looking volume which is held below the board—*Waverley*, or *Don Quixote*, or *Adventures at Sea*—which the master occasionally forks up with an affected expression of horror, and commits to his desk, after a due application of the birch or taws. Then as to honour; the tortures of the primitive martyrs would be lost on them ere they would 'peach'—they all admit they heard something like a whistle, but could not say who it was; and the piece of bread which stuck in the master's wig as he turned round, came from no quarter that they could perceive.

There are great differences in the characters of classes at school, and in no department are greater differences seen than in the dead weight. I remember a class, the dead weight of which was quite remarkable for cleverness and vivacity. They were the merriest fellows in the whole school, and general favourites even with the master. They had one or two good story-tellers amongst them—one in particular, who was enough to have detracted the attention of a set of infant George Buchanans from their lessons. This young gentleman was also a good singer: his 'Froggie would-a-woeing go' was very generally admired. The class sat at a corner of the room, part on one form and part on another, and it was our juvenile Yorick's only principle in his school affairs to be at such a point in his class as to enable him to sit exactly in the angle. To attain this end, he never scrupled to lose a few places; or, if it was necessary for him to go up a few for that purpose, his companions were always willing to accommodate him. The fact is, that sitting in the corner was necessary to his commanding an audience for his entertainments. There, embowered in heads of listeners on both sides, he would tell stories and sing songs for half hours at a time, while the hum of the school served to keep the master in a state of happy ignorance of what was going on. One day, however, something having occurred to attract the attention of all but this joyful party, the general hum subsided of a sudden, when the worthy man was astonished, as he sat at his desk, to hear the words, 'With a roley polley, gammon and spinnage,' swinging off in full chorus from a spot not four yards from the place where he was sitting. The effect of such a sound, so unexpected, so inconsistent with the scene, was most remarkable, and

was not soon forgotten. The Roley Poley men, if I am not mistaken, yet have an annual meeting to keep alive the memory of their school-days.

But though there are specimens of the dead weight decidedly funny, it may be said that the general character of the set is a melancholy one. Times of trouble come which turn all their light-heartedness to lead. When a stranger enters the class-room, the dead weight is apt to have a very convicted appearance. Were their craniums ticketed, and the unfavourable bumps numbered, they could not feel more stuck up to shame. It is therefore not surprising that the absentees of the lower benches are always the most numerous. They are extremely liable to colds and cut fingers; and family doctors are more solicitous about them than their other patients. They go very frequently to the country; and they are constant attendants at public processions and meetings. These accidents sometimes affect a number of the body, more especially at a review before a few visiting officials, or on some day when a threatened descent is to be made upon them by the master. Still, they bring their written excuses from their papas—and, on failure of these, the compliments of their mammas, with the notice that she will write—and at times a doctor's note is tendered with becoming confidence. Numbers, however, are better watched at home, and they must encounter every mortification, till a settled apathy relieve them. Not the most apathetic, however, can contemplate without horror the great annual examination, when an inquiring public is let into the secret of the state of matters, and when sneering aunts and cousins ascertain with their own eyes the degradation of their young relatives. They feel, as they dress better for that day, no pleasure in the new jacket. However handsome the fit, they are merely handsome boobies. Tears of mortification are shed, and notwithstanding the threats of the father, the mother assents to the absence from the examination, and the same day witnesses the exit of the emancipated youths to the country with rod and fishing-hook. Numerous are the failures on that day; and some unfortunate youth who, in his ignorance of human nature, thought that those below him would stand true, and whose position in the class was approaching to respectability, finds himself now 'the observed of all observers.' The dead weight are frequently lads of strong natural feeling, and when they distinguish in the sea of triumphant and animated faces before them the somewhat blank countenance of a father or a mother, or the bewildered expression of a grandfather, who had set them down as prodigies of genius, and who in his fondness seems clinging at that moment to the idea that the lower end of the class is the upper, there is a feeling in their now roused youthful heart amounting to anguish. Is it to be wondered at that so many families leave before the vacation, to bury, in rural shades, the disappointment of their hopes, and to shun the degradations of such a scene? What 'a ghastly glitter' the gilded prize-books have to the now thinned dead weight! And the number of the prizes, too, makes their shame the more marked, as more than the half of the now apparent class are so distinguished. The tone of condolence and encouragement too, which the presiding examiner mingles in his address, when he alludes to those who have not got prizes, appears to them a public notice of their inefficiency; and the lengthened and pitying faces of the auditory during the allusion, an awful expression of hopeless contempt. On returning from the exhibition, the dinner-scene at home is frequently a distressing one. The father may be a magistrate, whose presence is officially due at the annual

dinner, or he may be a person of such consequence, that he was invited to attend; still, he could not face it out, and he is compelled to eat the bread of family sorrow. The bread of the youth that day is watered with tears: the father, stern and unforgiving, threatens a boarding-school at a distance, and asks the perplexed youth what is the choice of his profession. As to being his successor, it is out of the question; he has no head for it. After considerable family wrangling, the youth is packed off to a remote and obscure school, where his progress, however slow, will not meet their observation, and cast a reproach on the family.

These pictures of youthful misery and family distress are numerous in our country. There is a long train of inconveniences and disasters connected with them—alienation of children from their parents, rash entrances on professions, aversion to mental improvement, and frequently the contraction of low and seducing friendships. But, it may be said, what can be done to prevent this? In every class there must be the same relations, and why point out evils for which there can be no mitigation or cure?

I am not quite sure that the dead weight is an evil incapable of at least diminution. What is the cause of the dead weight? It is, that a certain portion of the boys associated in classes with a regard to age are of different grades of faculties, one set being apt and brilliant, while the others are comparatively dull. Now, even allowing all other arrangements to remain the same, much of this discrepancy might be avoided by grouping backward boys of one age with smart boys who were their juniors. He must be a sadly stupid fellow who, at twelve, is not fit to march on abreast with others at ten, or say nine. Or classes might be divided, and the dead weight taught by themselves on a somewhat different plan, applicable to the benumbed state of their faculties. Half the time, spent judiciously in this manner, on each moiety of the class, while the other section was allowed to play or to engage in some other and lighter study, would probably be found to come to better results than the present system. Drawing, singing, and gymnastics, would form a capital relief for a dead weight just relieved from a harassing Latin examination.

Another subordinate and partial remedy would be to make a decided effort with the individual members of the dead weight, to awaken their minds to the object and character of the lessons. Sometimes a dead weight goes through a whole school course, as in a dream, totally unable at the last, as at the beginning, to understand what it was all about. Nothing was ever explained in such a manner as to enable their intellects to grasp it: they went through the routine, but there was no healthy intellectual consciousness of the matter and scope of the tasks the whole time. This is decidedly using the dead weight very ill. They are often blamed for what is more truly the fault of the master or his system. Endeavour to rouse the faculties of a dead weight, to get them to understand thoroughly the first lessons, and never allow them once to fall behind with anything in progress of being developed to the class, and they would often turn out very different from the dolt which they are set down for by a rashly-judging public.

But the most effectual remedy would unquestionably be found in paying more regard to the special intellectual powers and tendencies of boys, and selecting for them appropriate branches of education. We are all very variously constituted, some having an aptitude for language-study, others for matters of fact, some for numbers, others for mechanics, and so forth. But education, as usually conducted, concentrates attention almost exclusively upon language and numbers alone, the faculties for which, especially the first, are in very moderate endowment in a large majority of mankind. Thus many fail to advance, because the system is one to them decidedly inappropriate, whereas they might make a fair appearance, or even shine, in some other

walk. When this great principle in education is more attended to, we shall undoubtedly have a far less portion of each class included under the designation of the dead weight.

THE AMERICAN ALMANAC.

The United States of North America cannot boast of sending forth a hundredth part of the number of almanacs issued in England, but they at least furnish one equal in point of quality and extent to anything of the kind published in Great Britain. We allude to the 'American Almanac, and Repository of Useful Knowledge,' a work issued from the Boston press, which for the present year extends to nearly 350 pages, and is sold at the respectable sum of a dollar. A few statistics gleaned from this fresh mass of information may not be unacceptable to our readers.

Passing over the first part of the almanac, which is devoted to the usual astronomical tables, calculated, we are told, by Mr Benjamin Pierce Perkins, Professor of Astronomy in Harvard university, we come to a large body of particulars respecting the general and individual government of the states, population, finances, education, &c.

John Tyler of Virginia occupies the fourteenth presidential term of four years since the establishment of the government under the constitution; his term will expire on the 3d of March 1845. Mr Tyler's salary, as president, is 25,000 dollars; he appoints and is assisted by a cabinet of six ministers—the secretaries of state, treasury, war, and navy, postmaster-general, and attorney-general, each with a salary of 6000 dollars, except the attorney-general, who has only 4000. There do not appear to be any under-secretaries; the chief clerks, who are perhaps equivalent, receive each salaries of 2000 to 3500 dollars. The number of states in the Union is now 26, each of which deputes representatives to congress according to its ratio of population. The number of representatives at present is 242; of which New York state sends 40, Pennsylvania 28, Virginia 21, Massachusetts 12, and so on down to Arkansas and Michigan, who each send one. The judiciary consists of a supreme and circuit courts. The supreme court, which meets annually in session at Washington, comprises a chief justice, with a salary of 5000 dollars, eight associate justices, each with a salary of 4500 dollars: also an attorney-general, reporter, clerk, and marshal. The states generally are divided into nine judicial circuits, in each of which a circuit court is held twice every year by a justice of the supreme court, assisted by state or district judges.

The intercourse with foreign nations is conducted by ministers plenipotentiary, with a salary of 9000 dollars, besides 9000 dollars for outfit; chargés d'affairs, with a salary of 4500 dollars; secretaries of legation, 2000 dollars; and ministers resident, 6000 dollars. There are likewise employed about 170 consuls. The United States navy at present consists of 10 ships of the line, each with 74 guns, except one, which has 120 guns; 14 frigates of the first class, 2 frigates of the second class, 17 sloops of war, 8 brigs, 9 schooners, 6 steamers, and 3 store-ships. The regular army numbers under 10,000 men, and is in process of reduction to a minimum. The highest military officer is a major-general, with a pay of 200 dollars per month. The militia force, including officers and privates, amounts to 1,711,342 men. The post-office establishment has in its service 13,733 post-masters and their clerks, 2342 contractors and their agents; and transports the mails over an annual aggregate of 34,835,991 miles. Distance and weight govern the charge for transmission; as, for example, a single letter sent any distance under 30 miles is charged 6 cents, or 1d.; and if over 30, and under 80, it is charged 10 cents, or 2d. All the charges for letters seem exorbitant in comparison with our penny rates; but the mode of charging newspapers is more lenient. Newspapers being unstamped, with no duty on advertisements, they can

be sold cheaply on the spot where they are produced. When sent by post, they are charged for transmission within any part of the state, or 100 miles beyond it, 1 cent; if over 100 miles, and out of the state, 1½ cents. Periodicals and pamphlets are likewise sent by post. The almanac before us, consisting of ten sheets, is, we perceive, charged 15 cents under 100 miles, and 25 cents over that distance. These charges must fall heavily on distant purchasers. In Great Britain, periodicals of all kinds can be readily procured through a bookseller, without any charge for transmission.

The sale of land is an important branch of revenue. In the year 1841, the quantity sold was 1,164,796 acres, producing the sum of 1,363,090 dollars. The money received is divided among the various states according to certain ratios of population and federal electors. The customs, however, is the principal source of revenue: in 1842 they produced upwards of 18,000,000 dollars. The total receipts of the treasury in 1842 are set down at 34,502,593 dollars; but this sum appears to include at least 10,000,000 dollars of treasury notes, which, we suppose, signify borrowed money; the expenditure, including redemption of treasury notes, and interest on debt, amounts to 35,308,634 dollars. Exclusive of the debt and trust funds, the expenditure in the year ending March 1843 was as follows:—On the civil, miscellaneous, and foreign intercourse, 6,865,451 dollars; on military establishment, including pension and Indian affairs, 8,248,917 dollars; on naval establishment, 7,963,677 dollars—total (omitting fractions), 23,078,047 dollars. This statement brings out the remarkable fact, that sixteen out of the twenty-three millions, or more than two-thirds of the whole expenditure, were for war-like purposes. The public debt of the Union on the 1st of December 1842 amounted to 10,093,426 dollars—less than half a year's free revenue.

The rapid growth of the principal cities gives one a striking idea of the progress of affairs in the states. The population of New York in 1790 was 33,131; in 1840 it was 312,710. That of Philadelphia in 1790 was 42,520; in 1840 it was 258,037. In 1800 New Orleans was scarcely in existence; in 1840 its population was 102,193. Newark did not exist in 1810; in 1840 its population was 17,290. Lowell did not exist in 1820; in 1840 its population was 20,796.

The number of states in the Union, as we have said, is at present twenty-six, along with three territories and one district. The total free population of the states in 1790 was 3,929,827; in 1840 it was 17,063,353. The total slave population in 1790 was 697,897; in 1840 it was 2,487,355; the ratio of free to slaves, therefore, is rather more than 7 to 1. The number of slaves in each state in 1840 was as follows:—Maine 0, New Hampshire 1, Vermont 0, Massachusetts 0, Rhode Island 5, Connecticut 17, New York 4, New Jersey 674, Pennsylvania 64, Delaware 2605, Maryland 89,737, Virginia 448,987, North Carolina 245,817, South Carolina 327,038, Georgia 280,944, Alabama 233,532, Mississippi 195,211, Louisiana 168,452, Arkansas 19,935, Tennessee 183,059, Kentucky 182,258, Ohio 3, Michigan 0, Indiana 3, Illinois 331, Missouri 58,240, district of Columbia 4694, Florida territory 25,717, Wisconsin territory 11, Iowa territory 16.

From tables illustrative of educational, medical, and religious statistics, we learn that there are 105 colleges for the higher branches of education in the states, the greater number attended by from 60 to 150 pupils, but some have as many as 300. The largest college library is that of Harvard university, which contains 53,000 volumes. The greater number of the colleges are under the influence of special religious denominations. Independently of these colleges, there are 38 theological seminaries. There are 28 medical schools and 8 law schools. The Protestant Episcopal church consists of 21 bishops, with their respective dioceses, 1135 ministering clergy, and 55,427 members or communicants. The Roman Catholic church consists of 20 bishops, one of whom is an archbishop; 579 ministering clergy; number

of members not stated. The Methodist Episcopal church consists of 15 conferences, 4244 travelling preachers, 7621 local preachers, white members or communicants 936,736, coloured 128,410—total 1,068,525. The Baptist body comprehends 8383 churches, 5398 ministers, and 611,527 communicants. The Free-Will Baptist connexion embraces 1057 churches, 714 ordained preachers, and 50,688 members. To the Presbyterians (old school) there belong 2092 churches, 1434 ministers; number of members not stated. The Congregationalists in 1841 had 971 churches, and 774 ministers; members not stated. The Lutheran church has 1371 churches, 424 ministers, and 146,300 members. The Universalists have 918 churches, and 476 ministers; members not stated. The tables do not include the smaller sects.

A considerable portion of the almanac is occupied with lists of officials and other matters connected with the individual states, each of which possesses its own executive, legislative, judiciary, school system, and debt. The annual salary of the state governors is various; in Maine the governor receives 1500 dollars, in New Hampshire 1000, in Massachusetts 2500, in New York 4000, and so on. The free population in 1840, and debt in 1842 or 1843 of each state, may be noted as follows:—Maine, population, 501,793; debt, 1,725,362 dollars. New Hampshire, 284,574; no financial statement. Vermont, 291,948; no financial statement. Massachusetts, 737,699; debt, 6,264,740 dollars. Rhode Island, 108,830; debt, 64,255 dollars. Connecticut, 309,978; debt none, and apparently money in hand. New York, 2,428,921; debt (January 1843), 31,583,138 dollars. New Jersey, 373,306; debt, none stated, but we observe a temporary loan of 39,000 dollars was made in 1842. Pennsylvania, 1,724,033; debt (January 1843), 37,937,788 dollars. Delaware, 78,085; debt (December 1842), 15,211,393 dollars. Virginia, 1,239,797; debt, 7,402,166 dollars. North Carolina, 753,419; no financial statement. South Carolina, 594,398; no financial statement. Georgia, 691,392; no financial statement. Alabama, 590,756; debt, 9,834,555 dollars. Mississippi, 375,651; no financial statement. Louisiana, 352,411; no financial statement. Tennessee, 829,210; debt, 3,015,916 dollars. Kentucky, 779,828; debt, 3,902,783. Ohio, 1,519,467; debt none, and overplus revenue. Michigan, 212,267. Indiana, 685,866. Illinois, 476,183. Missouri, 383,702. Columbia district, 43,712. Florida territory, 54,477. Wisconsin territory, 30,945. Iowa territory, 43,112. No financial statements for these.

The notices of school funds in the respective states are among the most pleasing features of the work before us. The greater number of the states appear to have general boards for directing and superintending elementary schools, which are supported by public taxes and the proceeds of land set apart for the purpose, also by fees. We observe that in 1842 the school fund of New Jersey amounted to 344,495 dollars, and that the number of district schools was 1500. In Pennsylvania, as far as reports had been obtained in 1842, there were 6116 schools, having 5176 male teachers and 231 female teachers: 554 schools are said still to be required. On turning to Ohio, we see that in 1842 it distributed 233,350 dollars on the common schools. In Michigan the school fund consists of every sixteenth section (640 acres) of land in each surveyed township. The total amount of school lands in this state is 1,000,000 acres; number of school districts, 2312; children reported in the districts, 64,871; attending district schools, 56,173; attending private schools, 3196. It appears from this that almost every child is at school, a fact not more gratifying than singular, considering that the attendance is voluntary.

We should have been glad if, in addition to the numerous facts embraced in the almanac, some distinct information had been presented respecting the amount of monies borrowed from foreign countries by the different states, the cause for contracting such debts, and the reasons for repudiating payment. In the silence of our

authority on these points, we turn to another production of the transatlantic press, the North American Review for the first month of the present year, where, in an article on the subject, we glean the following intelligence.

Pennsylvania, as we have seen, had in 1843 a debt of 37,987,788 dollars, of which 30,533,629 were borrowed to farm canals and railways, 4,410,135 to pay interest on previous debt, and the rest generally for other public purposes. The stagnation of trade and general embarrassment rendered it impossible for the state, with its ordinary resources, to preserve credit; certificates were issued by the treasury to the creditors, bearing interest at 6 per cent.; but these certificates, with the interest which has accrued on them, are yet unpaid. The annual charge for interest is, in round numbers, 2,000,000 dollars. 'Suppose the public works were to yield no revenue at all, and the whole of this charge were to fall on the people in a direct tax, it is only one per cent. on their annual products: a tax of one dollar a-head would nearly pay it.' The reviewer informs us that Pennsylvania has not wished to act fraudulently; it has made unsuccessful attempts to raise funds; yet why its legislature has not imposed taxes to meet the deficiency, is not explained: the unwillingness of the people to submit to so small a capitation impost as a dollar per annum, and the fears of public men to lose popularity by making proposals disagreeable to the electors, must be the real cause of the bankruptcy. Maryland is another delinquent state, which has failed, during the last two years, to make payment of the interest on her public debt, 'which was contracted to carry on great public improvements, by purchases of stock in canal and railroad companies, and loans to such companies. The money required for interest is 6,000,000 dollars annually. Of this sum 450,000 dollars would require to be raised by direct taxation. The legislature has ordained a tax for the purpose; but it cannot be raised; the collection of the cash seems an impossibility. The want of will to pay is the cause of this dishonourable state of affairs. The people of Maryland say, that, by the constitution, taxes can only be imposed 'for the support of government'; and that, as the construction of railroads and canals is not one of the legitimate objects of government, they will not pay any tax of that nature. This is a bad excuse. The first object of government undoubtedly is, to secure its citizens from violence and wrong. But this by no means exhausts its powers or fulfills its duties. It may do much towards the increase of knowledge, the advancement of education, both religious and secular, the progress of the sciences, the promotion of a free intercourse between communities and nations, and the increase and diffusion of wealth and comfort; and what it can do towards these objects, securely and wisely, it is bound to do. This duty has been felt by all governments, and to some extent has been performed by all. Great public works, designed for the common benefit, and executed by the combined power of the whole people, have always been looked upon as monuments of civilisation, and of the wisdom and virtue of the administration which planned them. It is now for the first time denied that they are within its legitimate powers.'

The debt of Mississippi appears to have been incurred by putting bonds into circulation for the purpose of giving capital to the Mississippi Union Bank, an institution which lost all its money. The redemption of the bonds has been repudiated, on the grounds that they were sold informally, and below their value. Michigan has also denied its obligation to pay a part of its outstanding debts, which are in the form of bonds, parted with, as it is said, informally or illegally, by the United States Bank of Pennsylvania to certain banking-houses in Europe. Louisiana, by likewise loaning its credit to several banking corporations, has contracted a debt it is unwilling to liquidate. Indiana and Illinois contracted debts for public improvements, and are at pre-

sent unable to pay all demands on them. The reviewer sums up the cases of insolvency as follows:—‘States which are so deeply involved in debt, that it is out of their power at present to perform their engagements; states whose resources and means of payment are ample, and who have never questioned the binding force of their contracts; and states able to pay, but refusing, on the ground that they are not able to pay.’ Want of inclination to act honestly, however, is what Europeans recognise as the guiding principle of this wide-spread insolvency. ‘What,’ says the reviewer, ‘would future times say to a series of acts of confiscation by which the great republics of the New World, in the middle of the nineteenth century, should appropriate millions of property to their own use? The inquiry would be made—was it enemy’s property seized in time of war; or was it taken in the midst of a revolution, as a signal and severe punishment for great crimes against the state? If so, though opposed to the lenient and more humane spirit of the present age, and in itself of very doubtful propriety, the laws of nations do not positively forbid it, and the examples of nations in less favoured times might afford some excuse for it. But what must be the reply? It must be, that these acts were done in a time of profound peace; that they fell alike upon citizens and upon strangers; upon the child who was too young to be otherwise innocent, and women and aged men who were too feeble to be feared; that they were directed against no crime; that they were justified by no principle; that they were naked acts of arbitrary power, prompted by no motive except a base love of money. We cannot bring ourselves to fear that the American people, or any considerable part of them, will ever stand fairly before the world in judgment for this great crime.’

‘Let every honest man, then, take care to do what in him lies to protect himself from this great wrong, and never rest until the faith of his country has been redeemed, and its honour secured from reproach.’

THE BASQUES.

PART FIRST.

At the hour of sunset, late in the summer of 18—, a small party left the suburbs of St Jean Pied de Port, and took their way to the Spanish frontier. It consisted of a tall and handsome cavalier, of twenty-eight or thirty years of age, whose features were marked with care and anxiety, and whose dress and accoutrements showed marks of long service. He led by the hand a fine boy, of five or six years of age, and hanging on his arm was a young and handsome female, whose dark shining locks, large and brilliant eyes, with a figure of peculiar grace and elegance, showed the native of Andalusia. A tall and swarthy figure, half brigand and half smuggler, led the way; a long carbine swung at his back, and his leather girdle was garnished with pistols of formidable appearance. On the banks of the Bidassoa, a lad was waiting them with four mules, two of which were destined for the travellers, the other two for their attendant, the slight baggage they carried with them, and a few contraband articles belonging to their escort.

The drums from the citadel sounded the ventrée as the fugitives mounted in silence, and took their way up one of the gorges of the mountains, down which a threatening blast came groaning in their faces and made them halt for a few minutes, whilst the gentleman enveloped his female companion in a large military cloak, and wrapped the one which he himself wore more tightly round the boy he held on the saddle before him, and remounting, continued his way—the only conversation being such as their attendants could carry on between themselves during the intervals of the blasts of wind, which were now mingled with driving rain.

‘How did you manage,’ asked the lad, ‘to convey your horses to the Carlists last Tuesday?’

‘In the same way we have done before,’ was the re-

ply. ‘We were thirty in all, each mounted on his beast. On the mountains the advanced post asked what we did there? We were taking our horses to pasture, we said, and in effect did halt to feed them, but mounted again as soon as it was dark; and the soldiers and douaniers, not wishing to encounter so large a party, either did not, or pretended not to see us. But your father was not so lucky last night, I think!’

‘O, as to that,’ said Domingo, ‘we had a sharp skirmish with the douaniers, but did not lose the value of a pistol; our men threw down some packages of pretended goods.’

‘And did the bait take?’

‘Ay, ay; and whilst the fellows scampered after them, we reached the bottom of the valley with our powder and cloth, and they were soon safely stowed away.’

After about two hours’ march, the party reached the Col d’Ispey, where they found the ruins of a strong fort, thrown up by the French during their retreat in 1814. Some large branches of trees and remains of timber had been piled up, to serve as a shelter for the douaniers and soldiers, who had a small station on the spot. Esteban, the guide, uttered a low cry, resembling the shriek of an owl, and immediately a Basque mountaineer showed himself from the thicket. The two conversed together a short time in whispers, after which Esteban informed his companions that his brother, whom he had sent forward to discover how matters stood on the Spanish side, had brought word that he had heard a sharp firing between the Christinos and the Carlists, and that the former were bivouacked on their route; and they must therefore wait till they had retired, which they must necessarily do at daybreak, because the village of Erratsion, just below, was Carlist. The party then dismounted as quickly as possible, and Domingo was ordered to take the mules back to St Jean Pied de Port, lest they should betray the presence of the fugitives to the guard upon the station. Esteban, the guide, then conducted Don Romuald and his family under a hanging rock, surrounded by a close thicket, where they were effectually concealed and sheltered. The cloaks and light baggage were arranged so as to form a resting-place for the lady and her son, whilst the men kept watch over them. The rain had ceased, and the moon gleamed forth on the mountains, throwing the projecting rocks into bold relief, and adding depth to the shadows. At no great distance glimmered the fire which was kept up by the douaniers in their bivouac, and at intervals were heard the tread of the patrol who were guarding the pass through which they hoped to make their way.

The reflections of the chief of the party were anything but cheering. Don Romuald D’Arcos was the head of an ancient Basque family, and had distinguished himself as a Carlist leader, but his party had sustained several defeats; and some months before, he had been obliged to escape into France with his only child and Donna Francisca his wife, the daughter and heiress of a family of rank in Andalusia, who had left her friends and connexions to follow the fortunes of her husband, who, wearied with exile, and having barely sufficient to support the companions of his flight, had seized the first reviving prospect of better fortune which the affairs of his party offered, to endeavour to regain his native land; at all events, anything seemed better than the hopeless state of inactivity in which he had dragged on the last weary months of his existence. Anxiously did he watch the long night, and deeply did he consider what might be the event of the coming day, which at length began to break in the eastern sky. With the dawn came the sound of musketry from the other side of the hill. This was a fortunate event for the fugitives, as it drew the attention of the guard solely to the quarter from whence it came, and enabled their guide and his brother to convey them, and their slight baggage along a pathway nearly inaccessible, save to the mountaineers and their goats. But Romuald was a Basque, and accustomed to guerilla warfare, and, with the aid

of his attendants, safely conducted his wife and child through the pass, unseen for a while by the douaniers. The sound of bells now struck their ears from the town of Erratson, which lay below, and was the place of their destination. The sound was not that of the angelus, but the tocsin, which rung forth to call the inhabitants to arms. The Christinos were not, however, in force sufficient to resist the attack from the town, and, as the guide had foreseen, descended hastily in the direction of Aldudes, leaving the route open to the travellers; but the daylight betrayed them to the guard, who, taking them for a party of contrabandists, called loudly to them to halt. Esteban then led them hastily on one side, directing his brother to take an opposite direction, and show himself occasionally amongst the rocks, to mislead their pursuers. This he did so effectually, that in a short time Romnald and his family were beyond the reach of pursuit, and descending rapidly to Erratson. They halted for a few moments to rest themselves, and the Carlist chief uncovering his head, desired little Melchoir to do the same.

'Melchoir,' he said, 'there lies Biscay, the country where you were born, where I was born, and our forefathers for many generations. It is there they died, and there I shall die also. You must love that country as you love your mother and myself.'

The boy listened with serious attention. 'I know,' he said, 'that I am a Basque; mamma has told me so.'

'In that country of Biscay,' continued his father, 'they now make war, and men kill each other; but children have no cause to fear.'

The eyes of Melchoir sparkled as he answered, 'I must neither cry nor be afraid, but remain quiet by your side, papa, without thinking of the guns and swords. It is so the Basque boys do; mamma has taught me this also.'

'The war we make is a holy war; they wish to take from us our liberty, and our ancient laws and customs. One day you will understand all this.'

'Those wicked people,' replied the child, 'are called Christinos, and we call ourselves Carlists.'

Both father and mother repeatedly kissed their child, who was thus early taught to hold to all the Basque veneration for their *fueros*, or ancient laws, and thus was the seed sown which was to germinate in new civil conflicts in years to come.

'Remember my experience, Melchoir,' his father added; 'whatever danger awaits you in your native land, there meet it. To die in and for your country and home, brings with it pleasure and satisfaction; but to linger a fugitive in a foreign land, takes every charm from life. Your mother will one day repeat to you all that I have said.'

'And why not repeat your instructions to him yourself?' asked the lady.

'Francisca,' said Don Romnald mournfully, 'you know whither we are going?'

This presentiment of evil blanched the cheeks of the wife and mother, and the party proceeded again in silence till they entered the town of Erratson, where the bells were once again pealing forth, no longer signals of alarm or vengeance, but announcing tidings of joy to the multitude which filled the square before the church, who joined their triumphant cries to the sound, and shouts of 'Viva el Rey Don Carlos' rang through the streets. Don Romnald was soon recognised, and the populace joyfully greeted his arrival, which at the moment seemed an especial blessing from Heaven. Don Carlos having succeeded in making his way through France, and entered the Basque provinces, leaders to direct the vigour and strength of his partisans seemed all that was needed to give final success to his cause. It was a day of fest and rejoicing in Erratson; numberless guitars were sounding in the streets, and around them groups of young men performing the national dances, greatly to their own satisfaction and the amusement of the spectators. The gay costume of the land shone forth in all its richness; the velvet jacket, covered

with countless gilded buttons, the scarlet vest and velvet pantaloons, with caps of white or blue; for the red cap, as a mark of the partisans of Isabella, found no favour in a population devoted to Don Carlos. Groups of females, too, were mingled with the crowd, displaying their gay bodices of cloth or velvet, and long braided tresses hanging down to their knees. All was mirth and festivity: the war raging around them was forgotten, though the enemy were perhaps only on the other side of the hills, and might be within sight of the town in an hour. No matter; if he came, so much the better. And soon it seemed probable that such would be the case; for after mid-day a horseman rode rapidly into the plaza; the silver tassel hanging from his white cap showed him to be a Carlist officer, and the townspeople crowded eagerly around him.

'Men of Biscay,' he cried, 'Mina is advancing on the town with his battalions.'

The dancers ceased their sport, the guitars were hushed in an instant, the wine shops poured forth their revellers, and in an inconceivably short time the multitude presented themselves in military array; not in uniform, or with the arms of regular troops, it is true, but as a band of native soldiers, whose weapons were at hand and ready for service, though various in their form, and differing in their kind. There were the carbines of the smuggler, old Moorish lances and hunting-spears, with hereditary swords which had been wielded by many successive generations of Basque patriots in defence of their laws and customs, and who now assumed them without tumult or confusion, as men accustomed to such emergencies, and ever ready to obey the voice that called them forth to combat for the privileges of their native Biscay. The sound of national songs filled the air, and wives and mothers blessed their husbands and their sons, and hurried to the church to pray for their success.

Don Romnald was provided with a horse and a white cap with the ensigns of an officer of rank, and desired to take the command of the patriots of Erratson. Donna Francisca, in imitation of the females around her, endeavoured to receive his adieu without a tear, and merely asked, in a faltering voice, when and where they should meet again.

'Probably to-morrow at Lecarroz, whether one of my old friends will conduct you,' was the reply.

'To-morrow, then; not later; for a first absence, it is enough.'

When the troop had disappeared, and the deserted streets told the absence of their defenders, the fire which had kindled in her eye, and the colour which had flushed her cheeks, faded away, and catching Melchoir by the hand, she said, in no very articulate tones, 'Come, my boy, to the church—to the church, to pray for him.'

The next day Donna Francisca and her son were established in the largest and whitest house in the pretty village of Lecarroz, with Senhor Triarte, the old alcade of the town. Don Romnald had not yet returned, being still engaged in skirmishing with the troops of Mina a league and a-half from Lecarroz. For some hours Francisca had been seated by a window, with her eyes fixed upon the distant hills, from whence were heard at intervals the discharges of musketry, with now and then the roar of cannon. Silent and anxious, each volley produced a shudder through her frame; behind her, and leaning on her chair, stood a young girl, a daughter of the family, whose eyes were steadily turned to the same point, and who seemed equally wrapt in contemplation of the scene in the distance. Her figure was remarkably thin and slender, her cheek pale and wasted, and her lovely dark eyes surrounded with a deep blue circle, which told of watchfulness and sorrow.

After some time, Francisca broke the silence by saying, 'Will there never be an end of this anxiety and fear? The combat seems unabated.'

'No,' replied the girl sadly and slowly; 'neither party have yet yielded ground.'

'Have you any one engaged in the conflict particularly dear to you, Carmela?'

Carmela shook her head, and replied, 'The Carlists are our friends and our protectors, the defenders of our country and its laws.' And, as if to evade further inquiry, she said, 'Would you like, senhora, to go to the end of the village towards the entrance of the defile? We may perhaps find some one to give us information from the scene of action.'

Donna Francisca gladly accepted the proposal, and proceeding up the village, they turned up the gorge of a ravine in the direction from whence the sounds of the combat proceeded: the firing of musketry and the roar of cannon came more distinctly to their ears, increased by the echoes of the valley.

'Oh these cannon!' cried Francisca with a shudder.

'The Carlists have no artillery, and must capture it from the enemy at all hazards,' replied her companion.

They then seated themselves on a projecting rock; and after a short time Francisca's excited feelings began to vent themselves in tears. At first they flowed gently and in silence, but as she yielded to their influence, she began to sob more violently, and at length gave way to the most violent and unrestrained sorrow. After some time her companion caught the contagion of her grief, and it was long before the storm of their lamentation abated. When it had in some degree exhausted itself, Francisca said, 'It is not patriotism alone, my child, that thus excites you; your grief too nearly resembles my own.'

'No, senhora, no,' sobbed Carmela, giving full way to her feelings. 'You may avow your tears and anxiety before all Biscay; I sorrow for one I dare not now acknowledge—for one I have renounced for ever. You know how this horrible struggle has arisen; but there is scarcely one Basque amongst a thousand who has abandoned the cause of his country and the defence of our friends, to join the Spaniards and Christinos; yet there have been traitors amongst us, deserters to the Chapelgorris; and he who was my betrothed is with them, fighting amongst those renegades. When the news of his treason first reached us, my grandfather said to me, "Carmela, your engagement with Salvador Elyssalde is broken for ever: we can hold no connexion with the deserter of our laws and customs, with one who takes the bribes of arms, and is armed by England against his king and his country—a destroyer of our holy convents, and a persecutor of our holy martyrs. I must have for my grandson a faithful son of Biscay." You are right, my father, I replied; your thoughts and sentiments are mine; but oh, senhora, the first engagement between the Carlists and Christinos nearly broke my heart. When I saw the young men of Lecarroz march out as heroes to a holy war, the tears which fell upon my cheeks seemed scalding them with shame; but when they returned victorious, I felt my love for Salvador was not extinct; pity and alarm awoke within me—perhaps he was left wounded or dead upon the field—perhaps he was a prisoner and under sentence of death; and it is the same at every fresh engagement—the same struggle, the same agony. I know that to-day he is engaged there—there fighting under Mina, and at this instant perchance a victim or a fraticide.'

Suddenly a young man sprang on the rock beside them. He wore the Basque costume, but with the red cap of the regiment of Chapelgorris: his figure was blackened with the smoke and powder, his dress torn and stained with blood, and his long hair covered with dust; but, in spite of all this, a remarkably handsome youth.

'Carmela,' he said, extending his hand towards the maiden of Lecarroz; but Carmela repulsed him with vehemence, and cried, 'Away, away; there is blood upon you. Is it that of my uncle, of my cousins, or the holy monks of St Spiridon? at all events, it is the blood of a Basque. Go, traitor; go to your English friends; their pay is good. Go to your bloody leader, Mina; he loves such a sight.'

'Oh, Carmela!'

'Stand off, Christino!'

'I pray for you as a sinner; I pray for your conversion.' The musketry now sounded nearer.

'Fly, fly, and save yourself,' said Carmela.

'Where is Don Romuald?' cried Francisca.

'Returning to Lecarroz,' replied Salvador; and then added, 'I came hither, Carmela, at all hazards, to warn you to escape with your family and friends from Lecarroz. Mina, full of resentment for the assistance you have afforded to the Carlist troops, has denounced vengeance against your village: and now, Carmela, adieu!'

'Oh! Salvador,' replied the girl, turning to him as she was taking her way to the village; 'oh! Salvador, avoid the Carlists.'

The females found the village in alarm: the trumpet had recalled the men who were employed in guarding the cattle, and they came down into the place like an avalanche. 'The Carlists of Erratson are repulsed,' was the cry; and the men, seizing their arms, hurried in the direction of the fight, to aid and support their friends, leaving only old men, women, and children in Lecarroz. Nine o'clock at length sounded from the church tower, and the voices and heavy tread of men were heard approaching: the sounds of battle had ceased. Donna Francisca had been for some time kneeling in silent prayer, when Carmela said, 'The Carlists are returning in good order; had any mischance befallen their leader, it would not be so.' The voices could now be distinguished through the gloom; various names were shouted forth, and glad replies were returned. 'Our friends are safe again,' exclaimed Carmela, as the plaza filled with the returning troops. Donna Francisca called loudly on her husband. 'He has fought like a hero, and is safe and unhurt,' replied several voices. Still he did not appear, till at length the last convoy of the wounded arrived under his escort. 'See, here he comes, safe and unwounded, by the blessing of the Virgin!' cried Carmela. Donna Francisca threw herself on her husband's neck in grateful prayer for his restoration.

Lecarroz soon recovered its tranquillity. Mina had fallen back upon St Etevan, and Don Romuald had gone to Ellisondo to confer with Zumalacarregui, and from thence had followed him to Guernica, leaving his wife and child still under the protection of the alcade. Carmela had become as an affectionate sister to their guest, and had remained with her one day, when the rest of the family had gone on a visit to some relatives about two leagues from the village. Francisca was comparatively happy; she had just received a letter from her husband, who was safe and well, and was communicating to Carmela the contents of the epistle, when an unusual sound caught their ears and made them start instantly to their feet. A roll of drums sounded from the extremity of the village, then came the heavy tread of approaching troops, next loud voices issuing orders, —a wild cry of distress—mingled imprecations of rage and despair; all passed with the rapidity of a sudden hurricane, till the whole village resounded with shouts of clamour and alarm. Donna Francisca flew to the window; the name of Mina was repeated with wild screams from the women, and in deeper tones of rage from the men. Crowds rushed to the extremities of the village, but were driven back into the interior by the troops which surrounded it; barricades were placed against the doors, the window-shutters closed; whilst some vowed to bury themselves beneath the ruins, and others rushed in wild confusion from house to house, or hurried to the church. In the meanwhile the Christinos continued to advance, shouting 'Death to the Carlists.' Francisca caught her child in her arms, whilst Carmela, hurrying to a recess in the chamber, drew forth a couple of long knives, and handed one of them to her companion, who received it almost unconscious of what she was about, and thinking only of her child. The sound

of doors bursting under the blows of the assailants, and fresh shouts and cries from the houses thus violently entered, now reached them. The soldiers were already before the dwelling of the alcade, driving on a crowd of females, children, and old men with the points of their swords and bayonets, like beasts to the slaughter. The door of the house in which were the two females was only fastened by a slight bolt, and yielded to the first attack; the footsteps of the invaders sounded on the stairs, and the soldiers of Mina burst into the chamber. The women rushed to the window, and were about to throw themselves out, Francisca still holding young Melchoir in her arms, when they were seized by the men, and forced back into the room with shouts of brutal exultation. Carmela grasped the handle of the knife with a fixed look of despair, and Francisca fell upon her knees intreating the soldiers to save her boy, when a Basque officer of the Chapelgorria burst into the room, and, throwing himself before the females, brandished a pistol in each hand, exclaiming, 'Back, back; leave these prisoners to me!' The men slowly and unwillingly obeyed their officer, who, turning to Carmela, said in breathless agitation, 'Haste, haste—where are your friends?'

'Thank Heaven, two leagues hence.'

'Come then, fly instantly, or we shall be too late.'

'Save my friend and her child also.'

'Ay, ay,' cried Salvador; 'follow me.'

As they hurried from the house, they heard the plunderers bursting every door, and demolishing every article which they thought might contain anything of value, whilst others were throwing lighted fuses upon the roof, to grill, as they said, the Carlists who had secreted themselves from their search.

To escape through the village was now impossible, for the streets were filled with soldiers; and in the public place the captive inhabitants were drawn up in lines, from which every fifth individual was marked for immediate execution, and shot without mercy, and without a moment's reprieve. Numbers were already weltering in their blood; whilst the survivors, scarcely more to be envied, stood to witness the destruction of their parents, children, lovers, and friends, hopeless and helpless either to save or to avenge them. Such scenes were of daily occurrence in devoted Spain, and probably may continue for years to come.

Salvador, half dragging his terrified companions, reached the back of the houses; now concealing them from the shots fired against the fugitives in various directions; now leaping the enclosures, and rushing down the steep sides of the rocks, till they gained at length the side of the ravine opposite to Lecarroz, and were in comparative safety. A young girl had succeeded in following their footsteps, and was met by an elderly female rapidly running down the hill they were ascending.

'Benedetta,' she said, 'why are you alone? where is Dolores?'

'There—there below,' replied the terrified girl, pointing to the town.

'Why is she not with you?' Benedetta stood silent and horror-struck; her mother pushed wildly forward, crying loudly on Dolores; her daughter grasped her clothes convulsively, and whispered forth—'Dead, mother, dead; murdered there!' still pointing to the town.

'Save yourself,' said her mother, sitting down in tranquil despair. 'Leave me here, and save yourself!'

Other fugitives soon arrived, and were met by men hurrying from the mountains. 'My poor old father,' exclaimed one, when he heard the extent of the disaster. 'My wife, my children,' cried another, 'where are they?' 'Mine,' exclaimed a third with joy, 'are cutting wood in the forest'; then, as if reproaching himself for this selfish feeling, stood mute, regarding his friends with deep sorrow and compassion. But the sound of musketry again came from Lecarroz. In a village or small town all are friends or relatives, and the melancholy group knew that every ball was striking some one endeared to them by the ties of blood or friendship: every discharge

carried with it death to some well-beloved one of their kindred or companions, whilst they were impotent to aid or to protect them.

Near the spot where the party had halted was a small enclosure belonging to the alcade, in which was a thick copse of willows growing round a mountain-spring, and affording a temporary shelter: thither Carmela led her friend and her son, and was followed by Salvador; Francisca repeatedly embracing the rescued boy, and uttering broken prayers and thanksgiving to God and the saints; then, seizing the hand of Salvador, she added, 'My husband must thank you for saving and protecting his wife and child. May Heaven watch over and defend you.' And turning to Carmela, continued, 'It is for you, my child, to recompense him also; give him your hand.' Carmela, pale as a corpse, allowed her hand to fall into that of the young man, saying, in a sombre tone, 'You were within a little, Salvador, of finding me dead by my own hand, or a victim to your friends the Christians.'

'Had I not been one of them, I could not have saved you,' replied Salvador sadly.

'My heart is but too grateful,' she said; 'but your country, Salvador: Biscay may still count you amidst her destroyers and her enemies.'

'Carmela, are we not all by turns destroyers and destroyed?'

At this moment the wind wafted from Lecarroz a mingled sound of cries and lamentations, of threats and imprecations, together with the crash of falling buildings. 'Hearken, hearken,' cried the excited girl; 'my home, my friends, my country, where are they now?'

Salvador endeavoured to calm her.

'Do not these cries rend your heart also?' she continued. 'Do you not hear amongst them the voices of your mother and your brethren? It was in Basque, Salvador, that she first gave you her blessing; in Basque you received the first lessons from your father; and when you are with me, is it not in Basque that we converse? Have you been so long absent as to have forgotten all this? Have the lessons of the stranger effaced even remembrance of your native Biscay?'

'For a time, Carmela, this struggle must continue; but let us pray that peace and happiness may be the final result.'

'And when you have decimated the population, think you the remainder will submit? When you have slain the fathers, will the children never come to be men? No, no,' she cried with fresh vehemence, 'if you should exterminate us all, our free and independent land will launch forth her torments and her rocks to bury you amongst the ruins.'

'Be calm, dearest Carmela.'

'Renegade!'

'And have not you your martial laws?' said Salvador. 'If I fell into the hands of your friends, should I not be judged to death?'

'Do you think that would afford me consolation, Salvador?'

He turned as if about to depart. 'What!' she cried, 'are you going to rejoin these brigands drunk with our blood?'

The flames and smoke of the burning village were rising to the clouds. Carmela seized the hands of Salvador, and drew him to the edge of the spring. 'I have not visited this spot,' she said, 'since we were here together on the evening when my grandfather had fixed the day of our marriage. Little did I then think that the next time we should be upon this spot together, that I should here witness the destruction of my home, that we should witness these horrors together, and that I alone should weep for them'; then kneeling down, she added, 'Oh! Salvador, do not, do not return to them.'

Salvador raised her in his arms, and said, 'But my oath, Carmela; my oath to Queen Isabella; it is through her I trust to see the regeneration of Spain. In pity, spare me.'

' You will receive honour from all the Basques, and the requital of your love.'

' To betray the cause I have sworn to defend, and my young brothers who have followed me to this contest? Were it not for my love to you, Carmela, I could execrate the bigoted prejudices of countrymen, and think our emancipation cheaply gained by their decimation.'

With these words he dashed over the enclosure, and Carmela frantically cried after him, ' Return, then, accomplice of those demons; and the same curse will fall upon you all!'

Salvador heard, and once more turning round, said in a tone of deep sorrow, ' Oh! Carmela, let not Heaven hear you thus invoking destruction upon my head; and slowly descended again towards Lecarroz; whilst the maiden threw herself upon the ground in an agony of grief and despair. And these, thought Francisca, are the scenes of civil war, and in such my husband has embarked: the result is in the hands of God alone. And she knelt beside her friend in prayer; but the approach of night made it necessary to seek an asylum, and persuading Carmela to rise, besought her to consider where they could find the nearest refuge. At the distance of half a league was a retired farm amongst the hills, belonging to a nephew of the priest of Lecarroz, a relative of the alcade; thither they directed their course, and on their arrival found a few of the inhabitants of the ruined village who had escaped the fate of their compatriots, and were received with all the hospitality the place could afford.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

TO PREVENT VESSELS FROM SINKING.

That vessels receiving injuries at sea, short of utterly destroying them, should invariably sink to the bottom, carrying with them numbers of their unfortunate crew and passengers, is, we think, by no means creditable to the genius of an age in which such prodigious advances have been made in the useful arts. We propose to show how, with little trouble and expense, every ship which goes to sea could be rendered proof in most cases against submersion. The first thing to be observed is, that the specific gravity of a vessel, no matter what be its size, is usually less than that of an equal bulk of water. The addition of iron machinery, of course, greatly increases the specific gravity of steam vessels, and causes them to sink more readily than sailing craft; nevertheless, even in the case of steamers receiving severe contusions, it is observed that they do not sink all at once. Generally speaking, in the worst species of accidents, sailing vessels require from half an hour to an hour, and steam vessels from fifteen to twenty minutes, to disappear below the water. In nearly all instances there is manifested, as it were, a reluctance to sink. Trembling in the balance between existence and extinction, any little addition which could at the moment be imparted to the buoyant properties of the mass would turn the scale in its favour. We believe it has been repeatedly proposed to occupy all the spare cavities of vessels with air-tight metal tubes, by which sinking in almost any circumstances would be impossible; but on account of the expense, and the necessary structural alteration required in any such plan, it has never been practically adopted. Supposing, then, that a permanent means of extra-buoyancy is unavoidable, the following simple expedient may be resorted to in relation to all vessels already or to be built.

In each of the cabins, and other parts usually containing vacant space, let there be hung up conveniently on the wall, in the manner of a rolled-up hammock, or concealed behind a loose screen, an air-tight bag, communicating by air-tight tubes to force-pumps on deck. The instant the vessel strikes, and is supposed to have received an irreparable injury, let the tyings of the rolled-up bag be cast loose, and the force-pumps set in motion. The bags inflating with air like a balloon,

would speedily fill the cabins, or other vacant spaces in which they were allowed to expand, and would sustain the vessel on the surface of the ocean, although logged to the level of the deck with water. As a variation on the plan, the air-tight bags might be attached to the sides or other exterior parts of the ship; but as the liability to injury would be greater in these situations than in the cabins, it appears to us that the bags would have their fittest receptacle in the interior of the vessel. There cannot, we think, be the slightest doubt that, by the expedient we suggest, the sinking of vessels of every description would be rendered a physical impossibility. Nor could the expense of the apparatus—a few pounds at most—any more than the trouble of its application, be considered an obstacle to its adoption.

LOSS IS LOSS.

In connexion with the above subject, it may be well here to advert to a very prevalent error of the popular mind with regard to insurance. When any great fire takes place, such as those which have lately happened in Liverpool and Manchester, the paragraphist usually concludes his account of it with the consoling words, ' We are happy to learn that the property was insured to the amount of £30,000, which will nearly cover the whole loss!' The reader, previously much distressed by the details of the event, now cheers up, and goes on to the next paragraph with a re-assured mind, thinking to himself, ' Well, after all, there's no loss; that's a blessing!' So, also, when it is stated that the average loss of British shipping per annum reaches about two and a half millions, and is attended by the average loss of fifteen hundred lives, the public mourns for the poor men who have perished in the cause of mercantile enterprise, but takes complacent views of the pecuniary part of the calamity, for ' all that comes upon the underwriters, you know.' Because the owners of the property are not the losers, because the loss comes upon a company of insurers, it is supposed by the bulk of the public to be no loss at all. Now the fact is, that the houses burnt, and the ships sunk or dashed to pieces, with all the goods concerned in both instances, are as much *lost* in the one case as the other. The loss is not concentrated, as it would have been in early times, upon one or a few persons, but it is fully and unequivocally a loss nevertheless—that is, a destruction of the products of human industry, and a diminution of the possessions of the community; the only difference is, in its being diffused over a large surface. How truly loss is loss to insurers, could, we believe, be most pathetically shown in the state of several companies for sea-risks at the present time, suffering, as they are, from the unusual amount of maritime disaster which has marked the last three years. It is easy, with a little reflection, to see how the loss of capital to the shareholders in such concerns will tell upon the public interest, as all diminutions of the capital of a country are so much taken from the means of employing labour and producing further wealth. And it is equally easy to see how even the owners of shipping, however fully they may insure, have an interest in minimising loss at sea, as the smaller the average of such loss, the smaller must be the premiums required for insuring sea property. The losses, therefore, of marine and fire insurance companies, are losses in which the public is reasonably called to sympathise, and which it is their interest to see reduced to the smallest possible amount.

EFFECTUAL MEANS OF CHECKING RUNAWAY HORSES.

When a Canadian family-party, travelling in winter over ice-covered rivers and swamps, is so unlucky as to cross a place where the horse sinks, they save him from drowning, and themselves from the danger of sharing the same fate, by pulling a rope so arranged that it instantly chokes him. The water being thus prevented from entering his gullet, or windpipe, he floats on the surface, and it only requires a long and firm pull to bring him to solid ground, when, the rope being relaxed,

he quickly recovers his wind, and is ready once more to start on his journey. This plan of saving a horse's life by suffocating him is spoken of by the Canadians as an equally effectual and safe means of attaining the desired end, and it is in universal practice. A similar means of stopping runaway, and subduing infuriated horses, whether in riding or driving, has been lately adopted by Mr Miller, an ingenious saddler of Lothian Street, Edinburgh, not in consequence of any knowledge of the Canadian plan, but as an original idea. It consists of a rein composed partly of thread-covered cat-gut and partly of common leather, one end of which is attached to the bridle at the top of the horse's head, while the other rests at the pummel of the saddle, or on the splash-board or coach-box, as the case may be. Running upon the cat-gut part by means of loops, is a short cross piece of cat-gut, which rests against the windpipe of the animal, ready to be pulled up against that organ, by taking a hold of the nearer end of the rein. A quick and firm pull, to stop the breathing of the animal, is all that is necessary to bring him to an instantaneous pause. He may be in a state of panic, and running off with the bit between his teeth in spite of every ordinary means of checking him; but no sooner does he feel the stricture on his breathing, than he is conscious of being overtaken and nonplussed, and becomes instantly as quiet as a lamb; at the same time he keeps quite firm on his legs—the check not being by any means calculated to bring him down. On the contrary, from the position in which it places the horse, his shoulders being brought up, and being pressed back upon his haunches, the check is, indeed, eminently calculated to keep him up. A horse in a gig, fitted up with the safety-rein, was lately paraded before ourselves in one of the streets of Edinburgh, and the animal was several times, in the height of his career (once when coming rapidly down hill), brought to a sudden stand. We understand that the safety-rein is rapidly coming into use; and, friends as we are to everything that tends to diminish evil, and promote the convenience and agreeableness of human life, we cannot but wish to see it in universal application. We feel assured that henceforth, by means of this rein, accidents from the running away, or other violent conduct of horses, may be altogether prevented.

ZIG-ZAG TRAVELS.

Such is the designation given to travels undertaken by the pupils of boarding-schools in the south of France and Switzerland. Many of these youths, being too far from their relations to spend their vacations at home, fill them up with pedestrian tours through the most celebrated scenes and cities of southern Europe. Parties of schoolboys, numbering from half a dozen to twenty, equip themselves with blouses and well-filled knapsacks, and start off at the beginning of the holidays in quest of the picturesque, and of such adventures as their truly independent mode of travelling is likely to bring in their way. They are not, however, allowed to depart wholly without control; for the master of the school, or a trusty teacher, accompanies them to keep up the requisite discipline, and to act as pay and quarter-master to the little troop. Though there lurks in the plan the danger of implanting too early in life a taste for wandering, which is likely to engender unsettled habits, yet it has its advantages. Besides affording young people an opportunity, which may not recur in after-life, of seeing some of the most famous historical localities, it allows of indirect, and therefore the more impressive, instruction in some matters of fact and observation, which it is impossible to obtain in the class-room. Under the tutorage of a judicious and intelligent master, the pupil may learn more of nature in one of these tours than he might hope to acquire by months of school study.

From a well-written record of such wanderings much amusement is to be expected; and those who turn to a work, recently published in Paris, entitled 'Zig-Zag Travels, or Excursions of a Boarding-School during the

Holidays,' will not be disappointed. Its author is the master of an establishment at Geneva, who appears to make a rule of organising and performing a zig-zag excursion every summer. His present work gives accounts of six of these tours, which were performed in the vacations of 1837 and the five following years. The country traversed during these tours comprises—to quote the preface—"parts of Switzerland, the Tyrol, the rugged passes of the High Alps, and also the smiling districts which on the other side of the grand chain indolently reflect the rays of an Italian sun." In the last excursion the tourists reached the sea at Venice.

The first expedition consisted of fifteen young gentlemen (two of whom were from England, and two from North America), led by M. Topffer, and attended by David, a servant. Madame Topffer also made part of the caravan. This lady, most likely the only traveller after this fashion, trudged on foot, like the rest, partaking of the good or ill chances of the way with an excellent grace. Her presence was of great use in contriving and executing little comforts for the young travellers, which none but an experienced female can supply. Some management was necessary to make the undertaking pass off pleasantly; and M. Topffer explains his plan in a preface to one of the tours. The little travellers were associated in pairs, according to their various tastes and habits, and these pairs again into chamber-fellows, according to the exigencies of the nightly halts. There were the quiet pairs, who wished to retire to rest tranquilly and respectfully; the lively pairs, who assembled in their temporary sleeping-rooms, to make them ring with laughter perhaps till midnight; the bad-walking pairs, who were placed together to administer comfort to each other; the vagabond pairs, who never attached themselves to any set, but ranged from one clique to another; then there were the careful pairs, who possessed clothes-brushes and shoe-horns; lastly, the hardy pairs, who cared neither for wind nor weather.'

Such was the organisation of the party which set out on the 21st August 1837 from Geneva, intending to wend their way to Milan. As a specimen of their mode of march, we translate some of their adventures on the road. They approach the ancient city of Aosta, leaving 'on the right Pré-Saint-Didier, a pretty town seated at the foot of the gorge of the little Saint Bernard, and on the left La Salle, where the Royal Carabiniers looked over our passports [this hamlet being on the frontier line which divides Switzerland from the kingdom of Milan]. As we descend, the valley becomes fruitful, more and more wooded to Arvier, where we halted to obtain refreshment. The people of Courmayeur [where they passed the previous night] recommended us to see the White Cross; but after having vainly sought over the whole hamlet, we ended by discovering a cross which is black. "Pray, where is the White Cross?" we inquired of a fat old hostess who stood on her threshold, and whose complexion was sun-burnt up to the very roots of her hair. "Here, my good boys," she replied. "Here? Why, your cross is black." "Well," she rejoined, "what would you have? It is the same with me. I was white once—we have grown dark together." Upon this she laughed heartily, and set about supplying us with some weak but deliciously-sour wine, and some rolls and cheese, which we relished amazingly. We should have got on all the better for our lunch but for Bryan [one of the young Americans, and a keen seeker of birds'-nests], who, at that moment, saw on a posting-bill that bird-nesting was strictly forbidden by royal authority. Exasperated at this, he began to discuss the subject of national rights, denying to all the kings of the earth the arrogant privilege of forbidding the robbing of nests. "In America," he began—but M. Topffer cut him short by exclaiming "En route."

In about three hours after leaving Arvier, the party

* Voyages en Zig-zag, ou Excursions d'un Pensionnat en Vacances, &c. Par M. Topffer. Paris: 1844. The work is illustrated with cleverly engraved and admirably printed woodcuts.

enters Aosta, and having dined at an inn, sally forth to see the remains of antiquity with which the place abounds. It contains a Roman bridge, the ruins of an amphitheatre, and the celebrated triumphal arch erected by Augustus to perpetuate his victory over the Salasses (ancient inhabitants of the Swiss Alps). The young gentlemen are also recommended to make a survey of the colleges of Aosta; but they decline, on the plea of having enough of school at Geneva, and prefer seeing the Leper's tower, rendered famous by Count Xavier de la Meistre's beautiful tale of 'The Leper of Aosta.'

In the next day's route (to Verrèze), the young pedestrians give a specimen of their powers of mystification. They meet a countryman who was much struck with their costume, and regarded them with the minute curiosity of the Otaheitians examining Captain Cook. 'And is everybody,' inquired the peasant, 'dressed thus in the place you come from?' 'Everybody,' was the answer. 'It is a very long way off, I suppose?' 'On the borders of Africa.' 'You don't say so!' The picture which illustrates this little jest heightens it materially. The expression of the boor, with his eyes staring wide open with wonder, is most happily hit off. On they march; but, an evening draws near, symptoms of fatigue are apparent. 'To begin with our chief himself; though trudging sturdily on, he declares he cannot walk a step further. Then we lose sight of our companion Bryan, who has most probably returned to the state of savage life for which he has so great a liking. From time to time we see him established under a tree, or climbing a rock, or struggling like a lion with the insects of the air. He seldom returns to us but he has got hold of a serpent by its tail, or butterflies stuck all over his hat. We arrive in good time at Verrèze, a large village crowned with ruins. It is Sunday evening; the natives are playing at bowls; and, fatigued as we are, we sit down amphitheatre-wise on the steps of the inn, along with the village elders, who criticise the play. Our host is a man about forty, who was guide to Mr Brockedon, author of the Passes of the Alps, over all the surrounding country.—Here, as in many other places, there is a great scarcity of milk; to obtain which you must visit the large towns, and avoid the valleys. In the month of July the cows depart for the high lands, though of course the inns remain in their places below. In spite of every effort, there could not be found in Verrèze enough of milk to give us a cup a-piece, though our ordinary allowance was from four to seven. As we were departing in the morning, Bryan and Zanta, tormented by the stings of conscience, approached the landlord, and said in a repentant tone, "Monsieur, at the back of your house you have a little garden. In that little garden there are some excellent grapes—these grapes—The fact is, we have been gathering them. How much is there to pay?" The host set up a loud laugh, and said, "Stop a minute while I'll fetch a ladder, and you can go and regale yourselves." Fine instance of virtue rewarded!—though not much virtue either. The young penitents finish by having a good feast of grapes.'

At Ivrié, the aspect of the population of every Italian town is happily hit off. 'That which strikes us most—and more especially the Genevese of our party—in all Italian towns, is the prodigious number of persons who get their living by promenading the streets and squares, or whose chief labour seems to consist of lying at ease on their counters. At certain hours, nearly every day, there is a general doing of nothing, which is by no means gay or animated. If in some places one hears people really at work, they take care to let one know it, for they make as much noise as we do when there is a house on fire, or when somebody is being saved from drowning.' Arrived at Milan, the attention of the party is not long in being attracted to the duomo, or cathedral, one of the most gorgeous specimens of architecture in Europe. It is built entirely of white stone; and although begun in March 1386, is not yet quite finished. One hundred spires, and three thousand statues, have caused it to be likened

to a forest of marble. The principal spire is so lofty, that it is seen from every part of the city, and serves as a directing point to strangers. At a very great height a gallery runs round it, from which may be obtained a view of the plain of Lombardy, and of a semicircular chain of Alps which bounds it. This gallery is reached by 520 steps—a regular journey,' say the tourists, 'but a curious and interesting one. The ascent of many celebrated mountains does not afford so vast and magnificent a panorama as may be seen from the top of the cathedral. Many of our companions, perched on the straight steps of the spire, felt their heads turn and their hearts fail.' They all, however, ascended and descended in safety. The *Breyra*, or museum of painting and sculpture, was next visited, and several other of the notabilities of the city; and on the thirteenth day the travellers turn homewards, passing in their way Como, Lugano, Magadino, entering the Simplon. At the bridge of Crevola, there is a shop where the commissariat is replenished by 'six loaves, and a sausage three feet long—a boa-sausage—an extraordinary sausage. Supported by that sausage, flanked by half a dozen loaves, the caravan traverses the bridge, to encounter the yawning gorges of the Simplon. Passing through Isella, where our passports were scrutinised and indorsed for the last time, we enter the region of roads cut in ledges of rock (*galleries*), and rugged precipices of foaming cataracts and horrible solitudes. It was in the heart of one of these that we found a verdant and tranquil corner, watered by a limpid spring. Here we pitched our tents. Adolphe was selected to distribute slices of the boa-sausage. What a delicious repast! What a combination of charming scenery and good living! What a huge gratification of enormous appetites by means of the Titanic sausage, so appropriately devoured amidst nature's colossal scenes! The three quarters of an hour we thus passed we shall never forget. With what pleasure shall we narrate the delight of this halt to our children in time to come; that is, if we happen to have any children to tell it to. By way of dessert, we continued our route. The village of Simplon, Valais, Tourtemagne, Sierre, Sion, and Martigny passed, and the young wanderers reach the shores of the Lake of Geneva at Villeneuve, and crossing it, they once more enter their school-room, after an absence of twenty-three days.

We have traced the route of this first tour, to show how much might be seen in a few days with good management. The economy of these sort of journeys is another advantage. 'As regards the total expense,' says M. Toffier, 'that amounted to 2300 francs; this, divided by 20, the number of travellers, gives for each 115 francs, or 5 francs 50 centimes (about 4s 6d.) per head per day. This account includes every possible expense; from coaches, boats, guides, down to washing, exchange of currency, and fees for passports.' We conclude with a few random extracts from these amusing schoolboy journals. The following are traits of the English abroad, which do not appear to be very much overstated, though by no means complimentary to our national manners as travellers.

On descending the Grimsel, the scholars encountered several tourists who had accidentally met at one point. Among them was an English traveller; one of the 'No, No' species, tall as a crane, and mute as a fish. Those of his own rank he took care to salute, but did nothing more than make way for the rest. At the table d'hôte, he seemed not to be aware that there was anybody before or beside him, for he took no notice of the company, except to be so much astonished at their familiarity with each other, that, in describing the place, he called it the 'country where everybody talks to everybody else.' Another of our countrymen crossed them in Chamouni, a tall cross-looking Englishman, in a shooting jacket, who strode along in perfect silence, and without taking any notice of the surrounding country. Two men followed him, panting with exertion to keep up with him, each carrying a valise and a couple of guns, with which he in-

tended to kill as many chamois as he could. This, everybody must know, is easy enough, especially with the assistance of four fowling-pieces and a couple of men laden with knapsacks containing changes of linen and shaving materials! It should be remarked, that the number of chamois which a traveller says he has killed is not much to be depended on; neither is there ever a proportion kept up between the number of chamois which he slays with the number of guns he carries.'

The following hint may be useful to curious English ladies. The young travellers are in steamboat on the Lake of Geneva, and 'some English ladies, adopting a custom peculiar to their nation, instead of entering openly into conversation, smuggle one of our companions into a corner, and ask him all manner of questions about ourselves, and everything belonging to us. They imagine that this sort of conduct exhibits a decorous reserve; but it produces rather a stupid effect, particularly when frequently repeated.'

It is rather surprising that all the tossings and tumblings of an Alpine tour does not thaw the exclusiveness of our compatriots sufficiently to make them conform to the usages of foreign society. Foreigners mistake this national peculiarity for pride and arrogance, and well they might; but the truth is, its cause is that sort of ill-breeding which arises from a limited mixture with and knowledge of the world. Persons who have travelled much, unless their Englishism be very obstinate indeed, are more communicative, and therefore more polite.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

JOHN CLAUDIUS LOUDON.

JOHN CLAUDIUS LOUDON, so well known to the British public as the author of numerous useful works on gardening, agriculture, and architecture, was the son of a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. He was born on the 8th of April 1783, at Cambuslang, in Lanarkshire, where resided his maternal aunt—the mother of the Rev. Dr Claudio Buchanan, afterwards celebrated for his philanthropic labours in India. Dr Buchanan was several years older than Mr Loudon, but there was, says the authority from which we glean part of the materials of the following memoir,* a singular coincidence in many points of their history. The two sisters were left widows at an early age, with large families, which were respectively brought up by the eldest son; and both mothers had the happiness of seeing these sons become celebrated.

Mr Loudon was educated in Edinburgh, and early showed a decided taste for drawing, which he retained through life, though circumstances prevented him from bestowing much time on its cultivation. His facility in drawing plans, and making sketches of scenery, induced his father to bring him up as a landscape gardener; and, to give him a knowledge of plants, he was placed for some months with Mr Dickson, a nurseryman in Leith Walk. While boarding at Mr Dickson's, he used to alarm the family by sitting up two nights a week to study; and this practice he continued for many years, drinking strong green tea to keep himself awake. He afterwards studied agriculture under Dr Coventry, Professor of Agriculture in the University of Edinburgh, making notes of all the lectures he heard, and illustrating them with pen and ink sketches. Notwithstanding these studious habits, he was by no means averse to bodily exertion; and when at home during the vacations, he used to work with his father's labourers in the fields with such vigour, that it was a common saying among them that they were all shamed by the young master. Everything he

undertook was indeed done with enthusiasm, and with a determination to conquer difficulties; a trait which he retained to the last hour of his life. During his stay in Edinburgh he learned French; and from a wish to turn everything to account, he sent a translation, which he made as an exercise from that language, of a life of Abelard, to a periodical then publishing, called *Shrarton's Encyclopaedia*. This was his first appearance in print, and it took place before he was eighteen years of age. Two years afterwards he left Scotland for England, where he intended to practise as a landscape gardener. This was in 1803; and as a specimen of the difference between travelling in those days and at present, it may be mentioned that he was three weeks at sea, and at last landed at Lowestoffe, in Suffolk, the vessel being compelled to put in there by stress of weather. It was on a Good Friday, and one of the first impressions he received of England, was the horror he found he excited in the landlady of a little country inn by asking her to cook him a beef-steak on a day which she thought ought to be devoted to a fish diet. In a journal which he kept through all his early years, are some striking observations written at this period; and, among others, he writes, 'I am now twenty years of age, and perhaps a third part of my life has passed away, and yet what have I done to benefit my fellow-men?'—an extraordinary remark for a person so young, and which is rendered the more interesting by the fact, that the third of his life had then actually passed away, since he died in his sixty-first year.

As Mr Loudon brought numerous letters of introduction to the English nobility and country gentlemen, he was soon extensively employed as a landscape gardener. At this period he amused himself by learning German; and we find him selling a pamphlet, which he translated by way of exercise from that language, to Mr Cadell for £15. During his professional visits, he had many opportunities of noticing the state of farming in England, and finding it very inferior to that of Scotland, he determined to exemplify some of the Scotch improvements. He accordingly, in 1809, took a large farm in Oxfordshire, where, in the course of a few years, he realised about £15,000. In 1813, the continent being thrown open to the English, he determined to gratify a wish he had long entertained of travelling abroad; and giving up his farm, he proceeded to Sweden, after which he visited in succession St Petersburg, Moscow, Poland, and the Austrian dominions. His adventures during this tour were numerous, chiefly from the countries he passed through having been so lately the seat of war; and he kept a journal during the whole time, illustrated with spirited sketches of various places he saw, most of which sketches were afterwards engraved on wood for the historical part of his *Encyclopaedia of Gardening*. On one occasion, while making a drawing of a picturesque old fort in Russia, he was taken up as a spy; and on his examination before a magistrate, was very much amused at hearing his note-book, full of unconnected memoranda, translated into Russ. Another time, between St Petersburg and Moscow, the horses in his carriage being unable to drag it through a snow-drift, the postillions very coolly unharnessed them, and trotted off, telling him that they would bring fresh horses in the morning, and that he would be in no danger from the wolves if he would keep the windows of the carriage close and the leather curtains down. This circumstance made a deep impression on his mind; and when meeting with difficulties in travelling in after-life, he was accustomed to say they were nothing compared to what he had suffered during the night he passed in the steppes of Russia. He remained three years abroad, and on his return to England again practised as a landscape gardener.

The numerous gardens Mr Loudon saw during his first visit to the continent, appear to have suggested to him the idea of his *Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, the historical part of which contains sketches of the gardens of all nations. In 1819 he again went abroad,

* The 'Gardeners' Magazine'—the first British periodical devoted exclusively to horticultural subjects—established by Mr Loudon in 1806, and conducted by him till his death, when the work was given up.

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to visit the principal gardens of France and Italy, with a view to describe them in that work; and in 1828 he paid a third visit to the continent, travelling through a great part of France and Germany. In September 1830 he married Miss Webbe of Birmingham, who had displayed literary powers of no small promise in a novel entitled 'The Mummy'; two years afterwards his daughter Agnes, his only child, was born. From the time of his marriage he constantly travelled every summer, always accompanied by his wife, and latterly also by his daughter.

Mr Loudon's literary career, so early begun, continued, with very little interruption, for a space of forty years; and so voluminous were its results, that we can only attempt a mere list of his better-known publications. His earlier works were more strictly professional than those which marked his subsequent course: of eight volumes published between 1803 and 1818, four are devoted to the subject of Hothouses—the remaining four being on the laying out of Public Squares, on Plantations, on Country Residences, and on the Formation of Gardens. In 1822 appeared the first edition of the 'Encyclopaedia of Gardening,' a work remarkable for the immense mass of useful matter which it contained, and for the then unusual circumstance of a number of woodcuts being mingled with the text. This book had an extraordinary sale, and fully established the fame of the author. Soon after was published an anonymous work, written either partly or entirely by Mr Loudon, called the 'Greenhouse Companion,' and shortly afterwards, 'Observations on Laying out Farms,' with his name. In 1824 a second edition of the 'Encyclopaedia of Gardening' was published, with very great alterations and improvements; and the following year appeared the first edition of the 'Encyclopaedia of Agriculture,' a work evincing an immense amount of research, and forming one of the readiest sources for reference to the practical farmer. In 1826 the 'Gardeners' Magazine' was commenced, being the first periodical ever devoted exclusively to horticultural subjects. The 'Magazine of Natural History,' also the first of its kind, was begun in 1828. Mr Loudon was now occupied in the preparation of the 'Encyclopaedia of Plants,' which was published early in 1829, and was speedily followed by the 'Hortus Britannicus.' In 1830 a second and nearly re-written edition of the 'Encyclopaedia of Agriculture' was published, and this was followed by an entirely re-written edition of the 'Encyclopaedia of Gardening' in 1831. The 'Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture'—the first he published on his own account—followed in 1832. This last publication was one of the most successful, because it was one of the most useful, he ever wrote, and it is likely long to continue a standard book on the subjects of which it treats.

Mr Loudon now began to prepare his great and ruinous work, the 'Arboretum Britannicum,' the anxieties attendant on which were, undoubtedly, the primary cause of that decay of constitution which terminated in his death. This work was not, however, completed till 1838, and in the meantime he began the 'Architectural Magazine,' the first periodical devoted exclusively to architecture. The labour he underwent at this time was almost incredible. He had four periodicals—namely, the 'Gardeners', 'Natural History', and 'Architectural Magazines,' and the 'Arboretum Britannicum,' which was published in monthly numbers—going on at once; and to produce these at the proper times, he literally toiled night and day. Immediately on the conclusion of the 'Arboretum Britannicum,' he began the 'Suburban Gardner,' which was also published in 1838, as was the 'Hortus Lignosus Londinensis'; and in 1839 appeared his edition of Repton's 'Landscape-Gardening.' In 1840 he accepted the editorship of the 'Gardeners' Gazette,' which he retained till November 1841; and in 1842 he published his 'Encyclopaedia of Trees and Shrubs,' being an abridgment of the Arboretum. In the same year he completed his 'Suburban

Horticulturist'; and finally, in 1843, he published his work on 'Cemeteries,' the last separate work he ever wrote. In this list many minor productions of Mr Loudon's pen have necessarily been omitted; but it may be mentioned, that he contributed to the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica,' and Brande's 'Dictionary of Science'; and that he published numerous supplements, from time to time, to his various works.

A life so exclusively devoted to the literature of one profession necessarily presents few incidents to excite the interest or curiosity of the public; but it is not on that account the less valuable as an example and warning. No man, perhaps, ever produced such a mass of useful publications as Mr Loudon; and certainly no one ever did so under such adverse and depressing circumstances. 'Many years ago,' says our authority, 'when he came first to England, he had a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism, which disabled him for two years, and ended in an anchylosed knee and a contracted left arm. In the year 1820, whilst compiling the "Encyclopaedia of Gardening," he had another severe attack of rheumatism; and the following year, being recommended to go to Brighton to get shampooed in Mahomed's baths, his right arm was there broken near the shoulder, and it never properly united. Notwithstanding this, he continued to write with his right hand till 1825, when the arm was broken a second time, and he was then obliged to have it amputated; but not before a general breaking up of the frame had commenced, and the thumb and two fingers of the left hand had been rendered useless. He afterwards suffered frequently from ill health, till his constitution was finally undermined by the anxiety attending on that most costly and laborious of all his works, the "Arboretum Britannicum," which has unfortunately not yet paid itself.' This is indeed a melancholy summary of toil and suffering; and it is painful to reflect that so much labour and research, so much patience and industry, should have brought to its author no better reward than disease and poverty.

To his literary labours Mr Loudon, as already stated, added those of a landscape gardener, in which capacity he was at one time extensively consulted. His most important work in this profession was, according to his own opinion, the laying out of the Arboretum, so nobly presented by Joseph Strutt, Esq., to the town of Derby; but many other districts of England will long bear testimony, by the beauty and amenity of their scenery, to his skill and good taste in this department.

Mr Loudon's 'Arboretum,' we have already mentioned, plunged him in debt, of which £2400 remained, at the time of his death, to be liquidated not only by its own sale, but by the sale of twelve of his other works, which were mortgaged to cover its expenses. To free himself and family from pecuniary obligations, which five years ago amounted to £10,000, Mr Loudon laboured literally to the last day of his life, assisted by his able and gifted partner, who had, in the meantime, applied her mind to botany and other branches of knowledge cultivated by her husband, so that she was enabled to be of great service to him in his labours, besides producing many independent works, generally of a popular and pleasing character. Even a few days before his death, when public sympathy was beginning to be excited towards him, he addressed a project to individuals of note in rank, literature, and science, soliciting their recommendation and purchase of his works—his independent nature desiring to lean to its own merit rather than to be aided by a mere pecuniary subscription. The hand of death, however, interfered with this scheme just as it was beginning to operate in his behalf; he died of disease of the lungs, at Bayswater, on the 14th December 1843, retaining to the last that

* It gives us pleasure to observe that a scheme has been set on foot for the liquidation of Mr Loudon's debts by the sale of his works, and that it is succeeding to the satisfaction of its originators, the sum collected being at the time we write (March 20) not much under fourteen hundred pounds.

clearness and energy of mind by which his laborious life had been throughout distinguished.

Never, perhaps, did any individual possess more energy and determination than Mr Loudon; whatever he undertook he pursued with enthusiasm, and carried to an end, notwithstanding all the difficulties and depressing circumstances to which we have alluded. He could not be said to possess the higher gifts of genius: he was more a methodical compiler of the thoughts of others, than an original inquirer and discoverer; but in point of industry and perseverance he was unequalled. He possessed to an extraordinary degree the art of drawing forth the knowledge of others; and as soon as he had formed the plan of one of his works, he seemed endowed with an instinctive feeling which guided him at once to the persons who could give him the best information on the subjects he had in view—information which they were often not aware they possessed. Around him, in his study, masses of knowledge, thus gleaned from practical men, were arranged in labelled compartments, ever ready when needed; and by the alchemy of his mind, and the incessant labours of his pen, he gave these thoughts to the public in an inviting and useful form. ‘Those who knew Mr Loudon in private life,’ says an intimate friend, ‘will long entertain a deep regret for his loss, and will always cherish a remembrance of his truly excellent character and disposition. His vast and comprehensive talents were indeed “clothed with humility,” and were freely offered wherever they could be of use. He was most affectionate in all the relations of private life, generous in hospitality, candid in expressing his opinions, and an untiring and zealous advocate of every moral and social improvement, setting forth at all times an example of honourable industry, and of public and private worth.’

HUMOROUS PEOPLE.

THOSE persons who are always innocently good-humoured are very useful in this world, by diffusing a generous cheerfulness among all who approach them. Habitual vivacity has the recommendation of not only its own pleasurable feelings, but it has a sanitary benefit; for it keeps the blood in proper circulation, quickens the understanding, and even helps digestion. Indeed it conduces to long life: while, on the other hand, the habit of yielding to and fostering sadness of heart, embitters and shortens the days of the young. It is well said by Solomon, that ‘a merry heart doth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.’ In later times, Bolingbroke gave it as his experience that, ‘in this farce of life, wise men pass their time in mirth, whilst fools only are serious’—an observation that recalls to memory the lines of the poet—

‘Sportsmen find woodcocks by their eyes,
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If this be so, it is surely best to be cheerful, and, in the words of Byron,

‘To laugh at all things, for we wish to know,
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Sheridan Knowles, in his play of *William Tell*, has happily described the blessings of a cheerful temper:—

‘Who would not have an eye
To see the sun, where others see a cloud;
A frame so vernal, as, in spite of snow,
To think it general summer all year round?
I do not know the fool would not be such
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Humorists would be much more in favour, could they only be taught what are and what are not the proper times and subjects for the exercise of their jocularity. Above all things, they ought to refrain from playing off their jests upon the reputations and manners of their friends. The little incidents of the passing hour, and the lively fancies of the imagination, ought solely to supply the fun of the friendly circle. Natural imperfections and blemishes ought never to be selected as marks for ridicule

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The truly pleasant and well-behaved humorist will scorn to convert his wit into a sparring weapon or an offensive missile; but will ever be mindful of the observation of St James, ‘If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man.’ Ill-natured wits might take an improving lesson from an anecdote or two which we may here relate:—In the midst of a gay party at Versailles, Louis XIV. commenced a facetious story, but concluded it abruptly and insipidly. Presently, one of the company having left the room, the king said, ‘I am sure you must have observed how very uninteresting my anecdote was.’ After I had commenced, I recollect that it reflected rather severely on the immediate ancestor of the prince of Armagnac, who has just quitted us; and on this, as on every other occasion, I think it far better to spoil a good story than distress the feelings of a worthy man.’ The celebrated mimic, Griffen, was asked to imitate the person, manner, and singularly awkward delivery of Dr Woodward, the geologist and physician, in the character of Dr Fossil, in a farce then preparing under the title of *Three Hours after Marriage*. The mimic dressed himself up as a countryman, and went to the doctor to ask his advice about a long series of diseases with which he pretended his poor wife was afflicted. All this he did to justify and prolong the interview, that he might have sufficient time to study the doctor’s manner. This accomplished, he offered him the fee of a guinea, which the doctor declined, saying, ‘Keep your money, poor man! keep your money! you have need of all your cash and all your patience too, with such a load of diseases at home.’ The actor, on his return to the farce-writer, related this conversation, and concluded by declaring that he would sooner die than prostitute his talents by making a public laughing-stock of Dr Woodward, who, receiving him as a poor man, had shown tender humanity and compassionate sympathy at the narrative of his assumed calamities.

As the more a person manifests uneasiness at the direct attacks of a heartless humorist the better sport he proves to him, it is wisest to receive his sallies with apparent indifference, however acutely one may feel his cruel jokes. When Pollager was publicly ridiculed,

he hung himself from vexation; but Socrates, when satirised on the stage, showed his usual wisdom by laughing at the players. Whether his laugh was genuine or forced, must remain a question; for though

Excess of wit may oftentimes beguile,
Jests are not always pardoned—by a smile.
Men may disguise their malice at the heart,
And seem at ease, though pained with inward smart.
Mistaken, we think all such wounds of course
Reflection cures. Alas! it makes them worse.
Like scratches, they will double anguish seize,
Rankle in time, and fester by degrees.
Harsh to the heart, and grating to the ear,
Who can reproof without reluctance hear?
Why against priests the general heat so strong,
But that they show us all we do is wrong?
Wit well applied doth weightier wisdom right,
And gives us knowledge while it gives delight.
Thus on the stage we with applause behold
What would have pained us from the pulpit told.

ROBIN REDBREAST NOT A GENTLEMAN.

In the summer of 1835 we lived at Millburn Cottage, in the immediate neighbourhood of Millburn Tower (five miles from Edinburgh, on the Corstorphine road), and had constant access to the grounds. This residence was originally a tower, built by the late Sir Robert Liston—long British ambassador at Constantinople—on the site of his father's farm, and embracing the original farm-house as an adjunct to the tower, and finally to the very classical and beautiful buildings afterwards added.

The little farm-house lies behind the larger buildings; and a pretty esplanade leads from the whole to a small sheet of water (the first of a series of fish-ponds), beautifully shaded by wood, and the resort of various species of water-fowl. The whole grounds are charmingly wooded. Under a large tree in this quiet and secluded spot an invalid lady used to delight to sit and read or work in her Bath chair, the servants leaving her occasionally for hours. But she soon ceased to be without company; a bluff little fellow of a Robin first used to come and hop about her, chirping a little occasionally from the neighbouring hedge; by and by he would hop on the pole of the chair, and finally he would perch on the arm or back of the chair, and even on the lady's shoulder. She, of course, was delighted with such confidence, and often carried crumbs of cake, &c. for him, but which he seemed not much to value, having abundance of other food; but he was very regular in his attendance upon her. We all used to go to see him, and it made no difference to Robin: he went through his usual movements. At last we mentioned the circumstance to the gardener, who seemed to know Robin well, and, to our astonishment, designated him 'an impudent little scoundrel!' and not without cause, as the following anecdote will show:—

Robin had, it seems, been at one time a favourite with Lady Liston, and she had at this time been dead seven years. He lived constantly in the gardens, and habitually built his nest in the conservatory. His custom had for a long time been, and now was, to attend any strangers who visited the gardens, flying after them from pole to pole, and when they entered the conservatories, entering also, and hopping from twig to twig as they proceeded; and finally accompanying them to their carriages, or, if they had none, to the residence where carriages were usually left. It was also his custom constantly to breakfast with Lady Liston, entering the window boldly if it were open, and demanding entrance if it were not; coming upon the table, hopping upon her shoulder, and generally making himself perfectly at home.

In the course of his buildings in the greenhouse, he at one time took a fancy to have an esplanade to his residence; that is, he laboured for a fortnight to raise up a large leaf to where he intended to build his nest, and after failures innumerable, at last succeeded; and then might be seen strutting upon this leaf in front of his nest, and raising up his voice in what he meant for singing. Altogether, he was a remarkable bird, and was talked of and made of accordingly.

But perfection is not in nature, not even in a Robin Redbreast. Robin's character as a husband and a gentleman remained unimpeached for years; and it was never doubted that in these respects he might compare with any that ever wore a red waistcoat. Of course, however, he annu-

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Of course he could no longer be a favourite with a lady. He was denied the entrée to the breakfast-room, and even flouted away if he ventured to offer his attentions on a walk. One of the judges of judiciary having called soon after, it was even proposed to bring him to trial, and have him executed; but the judge gave it as his opinion that an indictment could not be sustained. 'Man only,' said this learned person, 'has the distinction of a *perpetuum vinculum*'—which may be interpreted, a lasting chain; '*secundum leges naturae*' continued the judge—which, again we must interpret, means, according to the laws of the redbreasts—'I am of opinion that he would be acquitted; et *apud leges et in foro conscientia*'—again meaning, both in law and in conscience; or that the verdict would be, as more graphically given by a Yorkshire jury in somewhat similar circumstances, 'served her right!' In short, it was a *noli prossequi*. But however the law might lie, Robin's character was blasted. He was never again received into favour by his mistress while she lived; and though he followed the usual course of redbreasts, he was a marked man. Even the gardener did not forgive him.

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The only place in England we know of where the great and the small frankly consort, is the betting ring at Epsom and Newmarket, where his grace will take the horse-dealer's odds, and *vise versa*—that is the place of almost national interest and equality; but what other is there? At Exeter Hall (another and opposite national institution) my lord takes the chair, and is allowed the lead. Go to Guildhall on a feast day, my lords have a high table for themselves, with gold and plate, where the commoners have crockery, and no doubt with a prodigious deal more green fat in the turtle-soup than falls to the share of the poor sufferers at the plebeian table. The theatre was a place where our rich and poor met in common; but the great have deserted that amusement, and are thinking of sitting down to dinner, or are preparing for the opera when three acts of the comedy are over. The honest citizen who takes his simple walk on a Sunday in the park, comes near his betters, it is true, but they are passing him in their carriages or on horseback; nay, it must have struck any plain person who may chance to have travelled abroad—in steamboat or railroad, how the great Englishman, or the would-be great (and the faults of a great master, as Sir Joshua Reynolds says, are always to be seen in the exaginations of his imitators), will sit alone, perched in his solitary carriage on the fore-deck, rather than come among the vulgar crowd who are enjoying themselves in the more commodious part of the vessel. If we have a fault to find with the fashionable aristocracy of this free country, it is not that they shut themselves up, and do as they like, but that they ruin honest folks, who will insist upon imitating

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ONE OF THE IDOLATRIES OF ENGLAND.

The only place in England we know of where the great and the small frankly consort, is the betting ring at Epsom and Newmarket, where his grace will take the horse-dealer's odds, and *vise versa*—that is the place of almost national interest and equality; but what other is there? At Exeter Hall (another and opposite national institution) my lord takes the chair, and is allowed the lead. Go to Guildhall on a feast day, my lords have a high table for themselves, with gold and plate, where the commoners have crockery, and no doubt with a prodigious deal more green fat in the turtle-soup than falls to the share of the poor sufferers at the plebeian table. The theatre was a place where our rich and poor met in common; but the great have deserted that amusement, and are thinking of sitting down to dinner, or are preparing for the opera when three acts of the comedy are over. The honest citizen who takes his simple walk on a Sunday in the park, comes near his betters, it is true, but they are passing him in their carriages or on horseback; nay, it must have struck any plain person who may chance to have travelled abroad—in steamboat or railroad, how the great Englishman, or the would-be great (and the faults of a great master, as Sir Joshua Reynolds says, are always to be seen in the exaggerations of his imitators), will sit alone, perched in his solitary carriage on the fore-deck, rather than come among the vulgar crowd who are enjoying themselves in the more commodious part of the vessel. If we have a fault to find with the fashionable aristocracy of this free country, it is not that they shut themselves up, and do as they like, but that they ruin honest folks, who will insist upon imitating

them: and this is not their fault; it is ours. A philosopher has but to walk into the Bedford and Russel-square district, and wonder over this sad characteristic of his countrymen: it is written up in the large bills in the windows which show that the best houses in London are to let. There is a noble mansion in Russel-square, for instance, of which the proprietors propose to make a club, but the inhabitants of Bloomsbury who want a club must have it at the west end of the town, as far as possible from their own unfashionable quarter: those who do inhabit it want to move away from it; and you hear attorneys' wives and honest stockbrokers' ladies talk of quitting the vulgar district, and moving towards 'the court end,' as if they were to get any good by living near her Majesty the Queen at Pimlico! Indeed, a man who, after living much abroad, returns to his own country, will find there is no meanness in Europe like that of the freeborn Briton. A woman in middle life is afraid of her lady's-maid, if the latter has lived in a lord's family previously. In the days of the existence of the C—— club, young men used to hesitate and make apologies before they avowed they belonged to it; and the reason was, not that the members were not as good as themselves, but because they were not better. The club was ruined because there were not lords enough in it. The young barristers, the young artists, the young merchants from the city, would not, to be sure, speak to their lordships if they were present, but they pined in their absence—they sought for places where their august patrons might occasionally be seen and worshipped in silence; and the corner of Waterloo Place is now dark, and the friendly steam of dinners no longer greets the passers-by there at six o'clock. Thus, as it seems to us, the great people in England have killed our society. It is not their fault; but it is our meanness.—*Foreign Quarterly Review, January 1844.*

QUICKSILVER FROM CHINA.

This metal—so extensively employed in medicine, in the amalgamation of the noble metals, in water-gilding, the making of vermillion, the silverying of looking-glasses, the filling of barometer and thermometer tubes, &c.—has hitherto been imported chiefly from Spain, Germany, and Peru. Now, however, there is a prospect of its being obtained from China, some of the provinces of which have been long known to yield it in considerable abundance. One of the main novelties in the Chinese import consists in the mode of package, the metal being simply poured into a piece of bamboo, about a foot long and three inches thick, having each end firmly closed with resin. This rude form of package is found quite as serviceable as the iron bottle in which mercury is usually brought, while it is lighter, and in every way more convenient for shipment. Specimens were recently shown in the London market; and from the remunerating prices which they brought, it is expected that renewed shipments of the article to Europe will take place on an extensive scale.

MOTIVE POWER OF NIAGARA.

Measurements, says a writer in Silliman's Journal, have been made of the volume of the Niagara river, from which it appears that the motive power of the cataract exceeds, by nearly fortyfold, all the mechanical force of water and steam-power rendered available in Britain for the purpose of imparting motion to the machinery which suffices to perform the manufacturing labours for a large portion of the inhabitants of the world, including also the power applied for transporting these products by steamboats and steam-cars, and their steamships of war, to the remotest seas. Indeed it appears probable that the law of gravity, as established by the Creator, puts forth, in this single waterfall, more intense and effective energy than is necessary to move all the artificial machinery of the habitable globe.

CARBONIC ACID IN THE ATMOSPHERE.

Observations have recently been performed by Bonsigault and Lewy, in order to ascertain, as accurately as possible, the different proportions of carbonic acid contained in the air of a large town, and in that of the country. For this purpose an apparatus was established at Andilly, about ten miles from Paris, and another in one of the most populous parts of the city. From the 29th September to the 20th October 1843, three series of experiments were performed at the same time, in both places, on 119 gallons of atmospheric air, so as to obtain from each

experiment about six grains of carbonic acid. After the most careful manipulation, and a reversal of the apparatus, so that no difference might arise from that cause, it was found that the carbonic acid contained in the air of Paris was to that in the air of Andilly as 100 to 92; in other words, the atmosphere of the city contains less carbonic acid than that of the country. A certain amount of carbonic acid (about 1 part in 1000) is always found in common air, be it ever so pure; but a quantity so great as that indicated by the preceding experiments, indubitably establishes the superior healthiness of the open country. It may be questioned, however, if experiment could detect any appreciable difference between the air of a well kept and regularly laid out city, and that of the country.

OUTWARD CLEANLINESS.

With reference to the conclusion of an article in No. 11, entitled *An Evening with the Working-Classes*, a friend points out the following passage of quaint eloquence in the works of Sauerteig:—"What worship, for example, is there not in mere washing! perhaps one of the most moral things a man, in common cases, has it in his power to do. Strip thyself, go into the bath, or were it into the limpid pool or running brook, and there wash and be clean; thou wilt step out again a purer and a better man. This consciousness of perfect outer purity—that to thy skin there now adheres no foreign specie of imperfection—how it radiates on thee, with cunning symbolic influences, to thy very soul! Thou hast an increase of tendency towards all good things whatsoever. The oldest Eastern sages with joy and holy gratitude had felt it to be so, and that it was the Maker's gift and will. It remains a religious duty in the East. Nor could Herr Professor Strauss, when I put the question, deny that for us, at present, it is still such here in the West. To that dingy operative emerging from his soot-mill, what is the first duty I will prescribe, and offer help towards? That he clean the skin of him. Can he pay by any ascertained method? One known not to a certainty; but, with a sufficiency of soap and water, he can wash. Even the dull English feel something of this: they have a saying, "Cleanliness is near of kin to godliness"; yet never, in any country, saw I men worse washed, and in a climate drenched with the softest cloud-water, such a scarcity of baths."

SONNET—EVENING.

BY MISS CAMILLA TOULMIN.

I LOVE to watch the bright stars, one by one,
As rushing through the veil of early night,
By tiny rents, they struggle into light,
Breathless, and trembling, now their race is done.
Watch! ye will see each mount its golden throne!
Pierce, with steadfast gaze, the other gray;
And ye will see outsprung each sparkling ray;
Shining as when the world was young they shone!
And Earth looks up with an un wrinkled brow!
And shall she thus a Hebe-mother stand
For countless ages still? I only know
How much I love to watch the quaint named band
With dim imaginings, for they will look
Upon the mysteries of her Future's sealed book!

NOTICE.

In a short article in No. 12, entitled *A Dishonesty in a High Welfare*, designed to stigmatise the practice of some Life Assurance offices in giving bribes to solicitors who bring them business—we gave a list of all known to us which abstain from this corruptive system, and promised to publish the names of any others which observe an equally honourable course; thus doing all in our power to make the public aware of the companies and societies which are, in this respect, most worthy of confidence. In conformity with this promise, we now add to the honourable list the name of the TRUSTEES OF THE PROVIDENT INSTITUTION, of 30 Moorgate Street, London.

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